

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer system for unified audio control,
comprising:

an audio controller having configurable control logic for
5 changing a setting of an audio output device in response to an
event; and

an operating system operably coupled to the audio
controller, the operating system having event handling logic
for receiving the event and communicating the event to the
10 audio controller.

2. The system of claim 1 further comprising an audio
control operably coupled to the operating system for inputting
a command to change a setting of an audio output device.

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3. The system of claim 2 wherein the audio control
comprises a speaker mute button for muting an audio output
device.

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4. The system of claim 3 wherein the audio output
device comprises the system default audio output device.

5. The system of claim 2 wherein the audio control comprises a volume control for adjusting the volume of an audio output device.

5 6. The system of claim 5 wherein the audio output device comprises the system default audio output device.

7. The system of claim 2 wherein the audio control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member
10 of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations.

8. The system of claim 2 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a computer housing.

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9. The system of claim 2 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a computer keyboard.

10. The system of claim 2 wherein a button of the audio
20 control resides on a computer monitor.

11. The system of claim 2 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a communications panel.

12. The system of claim 2 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a remote control.

13. The system of claim 1 wherein the configurable audio controller comprises a component with configuration settings.

14. The system of claim 13 wherein the configuration settings comprise user configuration settings.

15. The system of claim 13 wherein the configuration settings comprise default system configuration settings.

16. The system of claim 1 wherein the configurable audio controller comprises a component with rules for changing a setting of an audio output device in response to an event.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the rules comprise user selected rules.

18. The system of claim 16 wherein the rules comprise default system rules.

19. The system of claim 1 wherein the operating system comprises a component with control handling logic for receiving input commands from an audio control.

5 20. The system of claim 1 wherein the operating system comprises a component with logic for controlling an indicator of an audio control button.

21. A method for controlling audio devices in a computer
10 system, comprising the steps of:

receiving an event;

communicating the event to a configurable audio
controller;

determining a change in a setting of a plurality of audio
15 devices from the event; and

changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices as a
result of the determination.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event
20 comprises receiving an event generated by an application.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event
comprises receiving an event generated by a system component.

24. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event comprises receiving an event generated by an audio control.

25. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event
5 comprises receiving an incoming telephone call.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises muting the audio output device before establishing the incoming telephone
10 call on an active receiver.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises lowering the volume of the audio output device before establishing the
15 incoming telephone call on an active receiver.

28. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event comprises disconnecting a telephone call.

20 29. The method of claim 28 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises restoring the audio output device settings to their prior state after the telephone call is disconnected.

30. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event comprises plugging in a headset.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein the changing the
5 setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises muting the default audio output device before connecting audio output on the headset.

32. The method of claim 21 wherein receiving an event
10 comprises unplugging a headset.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises restoring the audio output device settings to their prior state after
15 the headset is unplugged.

34. The method of claim 21 wherein determining a change in a setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises using rules for changing a setting of an audio device based upon one
20 or more events.

35. The method of claim 21 wherein determining a change in a setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises using configuration settings.

36. The method of claim 21 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises changing the setting of an input audio device.

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37. The method of claim 21 wherein the changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises changing the setting of an output audio device.

10 38. The method of claim 21 wherein changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises changing an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations.

15 39. The method of claim 38 wherein changing a visual indicator comprises changing the amount of light displayed for a volume setting.

20 40. The system of claim 38 wherein changing a visual indicator comprises changing the indicator to the color amber while muted.

41. The method of claim 21 wherein changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises muting the audio output device.

5 42. The method of claim 21 wherein changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises restoring the audio output device settings to a prior state.

10 43. The method of claim 21 wherein changing the setting of a plurality of audio devices comprises adjusting the volume of an audio output device.

44. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 21.

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45. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable components, comprising:

20 an audio controller having configurable control logic for changing a setting of an audio output device in response to an event; and

 an operating system operably coupled to the audio controller, the operating system having event handling logic for receiving the event and communicating the event to the audio controller.

46. A system for controlling audio devices, comprising:

means for communicating an event to a configurable audio

5 controller;

means for determining a change in an audio device setting
from the event; and

means for changing the setting of an audio device as a
result of the determination.

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47. A computer system for unified audio control,
comprising:

an audio controller for adjusting an attribute of a
plurality of audio streams; and

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an operating system operably coupled to the audio
controller, the operating system having at least one audio
device driver communicating with at least one audio device for
transferring at least one of the plurality of audio streams.

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48. The system of claim 47 further comprising an audio
control operably coupled to the operating system for inputting
a command to change the attribute of the plurality of audio
stream.

49. The system of claim 47 wherein the audio device is an audio input device.

50. The system of claim 47 wherein the audio device is
5 an audio output device.

51. The system of claim 48 wherein the audio control comprises a volume control for adjusting the volume of an audio output device.

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52. The system of claim 48 wherein the audio control comprises a speaker mute button for muting an audio output device.

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53. The system of claim 48 wherein the audio control further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations.

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54. The system of claim 48 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a computer housing.

55. The system of claim 48 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a computer keyboard.

56. The system of claim 48 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a computer monitor.

5 57. The system of claim 48 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a communications panel.

58. The system of claim 48 wherein a button of the audio control resides on a remote control.

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59. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable components, comprising:

an audio controller for adjusting an attribute of a plurality of audio streams; and

15 an operating system operably coupled to the audio controller, the operating system having at least one audio driver for handling the plurality of audio streams.

20 60. A system for controlling audio devices, comprising:
means for handling a plurality of audio streams;
means for inputting a command to adjust an attribute of the plurality of audio stream; and
means for adjusting the attribute for the plurality of audio streams.

61. A method for controlling audio devices in a computer system, comprising the steps of:

receiving an input command from an audio control to
5 adjust an attribute of a plurality of audio streams;

adjusting the attribute for the plurality of audio streams; and

outputting at least one of the plurality of audio streams having the attribute adjusted.

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62. A method in a computer system, comprising:

launching a first application handling an audio stream;

adjusting an attribute of the audio stream;

launching a second application handling a different audio
15 stream;

adjusting an attribute of the different audio stream;

terminating execution of the second application; and

restoring the attributes of the audio stream of the first application.

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